

July 9, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David C. Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: US/Canada area program code for Obscon
and calling in round weights

Item 1: A new program code has been added to Obscon to identify trips made in US/Canada areas. The new **PROGRAM CODE** is **130**.

Item 2: **If calling in Obscon for a US/Canada trip**, observers must report the **ROUND** weight of kept and discarded cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder for the trip.

Background: These changes are a result of the Framework Adjustment 40A to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. The U.S. and Canada have an understanding through a U.S./Canada Resource Sharing Understanding to share Georges Bank cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder stocks. There are catch limitations of these species in specified areas. There are 4 areas referred to as: Eastern U.S./Can area excluding yellowtail SAP, yellowtail flounder closed area II SAP, Eastern U.S./Can area, and Western U.S./Can area - collectively known as US/Can areas. Vessels using groundfish Days At Sea in those areas must have VMS and notify the Observer Program (Jay Litchfield) 72 hours before making a trip in those areas. Jay either assigns an observer or grants a waiver. Waivers or assignments are sent back to the vessels via VMS fax in 3 days (72 hours).

Item 1: The Observer Program needs to report the percent coverage in the U.S./Can areas and without a program code it is difficult

to identify which trips are considered the U.S./Can trips. It will be important for the observers (and/or area coordinators) to use PROGRAM CODE 130 when reporting in OBSCON. For these trips, observers must also record 130 for the PROJECT NAME in the upper right corner of the VESSEL & TRIP INFORMATION LOG.

Item 2: There is a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of GB cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder in these areas. The vessel is required to report their daily catch and discard of the shared stocks through VMS to the NMFS Regional Office (requirements vary slightly by area fished). As a method to verify accurate reporting by vessels, observers are also reporting the catch of those species when the vessel lands. Observers report their Obscon trip as usual to their AC's, however, in addition, they also call in the total pounds kept and total pounds discarded of cod, haddock, and yellowtail for the trip. AC's send along the Obscon and U.S./Can Catch Summary to NMFS in Woods Hole and the information is sent to the Regional Office.

A spreadsheet was sent to AIS to go to the AC's and observers (a copy is attached). The observers were asked to summarize the kept and discarded weights of yellowtail flounder, cod, and haddock for the trip and call it in (or email it) to the AC's. This requirement has not changed, however it is further clarified that these should be ROUND weights (not dressed weights).

To convert the following dressed fish weights to round weights: for cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17; and for haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14. There is no conversion factor for yellowtail flounder.

Please contact Amy Van Atten at (508) 495-2266 if you have any questions relating to these requirements. Thanks for your continued attention to these details.

Attachment: U.S./Canada Species Weights Summary Sheet

US/Canada Resource Sharing Fishing Program

Weights reported as round weights in whole pounds.

(To convert the following dressed fish weights to round weights:

for cod, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.17; and

for haddock, multiply the dressed weight by a factor of 1.14.)

[illegible]